
WHAT'S THE SCOOP?

In this week's Teacher's Corner, students practice speaking, writing, and reading skills by putting together news radio broadcasts.

LEVEL

Intermediate to Advanced

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Reading, writing (primary focus); listening, speaking (secondary focus)

GOALS

During this activity students will:

- practice writing news stories
- record a news radio program

MATERIALS

- Teacher: whiteboard/chalkboard, markers or chalk
- Students: pencils or pens, notebooks or writing paper

PREPARATION

1. Read all of the materials carefully before starting the activity.

Note: Idioms/slang related to newspapers and news radio have a long tradition in American culture. In news slang, to scoop (v.) means to publish information or a news story before other newspapers. *Scoop* can be used as a noun as well. The title of part three of this activity "Over to You" is a phrase used to transition between news stories on television or radio. For example: a news story may end with "and that is the local news today. Coming up next we have the weather with Eddie. Over to you Eddie."

ACTIVITY PART ONE: THE CLASSROOM NEWS

1. Begin the activity by having students form small groups of 3 to 4 students. Each small group will form a news team. For the remainder of the activity, students will work in these news teams. Each news team will produce one radio broadcast.
2. In their news teams, have the students brainstorm the types of stories they read in the news or listen to on the radio, such as international news, local news, sports, movie reviews, etc.
3. After the news teams have brainstormed ideas, have them share their ideas with the class. As groups announce their list to the class, write them on the chalkboard.
4. Once all the ideas have been listed on the board, ask the news teams which of the types of news stories they find the most interesting. Inform the students that these news stories will be

the ones they include in a radio broadcast. Topics could include international news, the economy, entertainment, sports, weather, etc.

- a. Have each news team vote on the news stories they want to include in their radio program.

Note: Some topics of the news can be more challenging for students to write about than others, such as international news or business news. If these topics are too difficult for the students' language level, the radio broadcast can be created with smaller topics. For example, instead of one story within the topic of entertainment, the radio broadcast can have two, such as movie news and music news.

5. Once the news teams decide which topics to include in their radio broadcast, have them select a producer. The producer is responsible for organizing the radio broadcast and making sure the stories are written and submitted on time. The producer will act as the team leader for his/her news team.

ACTIVITY PART TWO: WHAT'S THE SCOOP

1. Once the news teams have decided which topics to include in the radio broadcast, have the news teams decide which student will write which topic.
2. Once students know the topic they will write about, have them get out paper and a pencil or pen and begin brainstorming possible ideas for a news story. Encourage the students to write down a general idea at the top of their paper. Below this they should write down the "5 Ws and H" questions of a newspaper story: *Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How*. Each of these should be included in each story.

Note: This brainstorming activity will vary depending on the topics of the radio broadcast students decided to include. Be sure to circulate around the room and help students brainstorm ideas. The news topics easiest to write will probably be local news, entertainment, sports, and weather. These topics are all common parts of American news radio broadcasts.

- i. In the entertainment section, possible story ideas are a review of a new movie or music album, a local performance occurring in town, or a story about the life of a famous celebrity.

Note: For lower-level classes, students can work in pairs to write a story together.

3. Instruct the students to continue the story-writing exercise at home as a homework assignment. For this activity, be sure to set a longer than normal homework deadline, such as one week. After you give the homework assignment and the due date, it will be the responsibility of the news team producers to make sure students complete the homework!

ACTIVITY PART THREE: OVER TO YOU

After the students have completed their homework, begin this section of the activity. In this part of the activity, the students will organize their radio broadcast, practice reading it, and record it for a homework assignment.

1. Begin this section of the activity by having the student gather into their news teams.



2. In their news teams, students should read the news stories written by their classmates in their news team. They should then select the order in which the stories will be read during the broadcast.
 - a. Remind students that they want to choose an interesting or exciting story for their *lead*. In American journalism, the lead is the first and most important story in a newspaper or on a radio broadcast.
3. Once the news teams have selected their lead, have them decide the order of the remaining stories for the radio broadcast.

Note: Many American radio broadcasts follow a similar pattern; they begin with local news, then international news, then weather, and conclude with sports. If teams are having trouble organizing their radio broadcast, suggest they follow that pattern.
4. Once the news teams have decided the order of their stories, have them practice reading their stories out loud. Each student in the news team should read one news story in the radio broadcast.

Note: Remind students to include transitions in their news stories. Usually, a news story will end with a transition to the next story. For example, a news story may end with, "...and that is the local news today. Coming up next we have the weather with Eddie. Over to you Eddie."

Homework Activity: For homework, have students record their radio broadcast. If students are feeling creative, encourage them to record and edit their radio broadcast using a free audio editing tool such as Audacity.

Optional Activity: Once each news team has recorded their radio broadcast, have them share their recording with the rest of class for other students to listen to for extra listening practice.

For more information on using Audacity for recording, check out: [Audacity: Audio Recording Software](#)
For more ideas on creating audio recordings for the classroom, check out the webinar: [Podcasting in the Classroom](#).

For more ideas on using news in the classroom, check out the [March 2016 Teacher's Corner](#).